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U.S. LIFTS BAR ON INTERACTION WITH TAIWANESE OFFICIALS

The US has lifted the 'self-imposed restrictions' on contacts between American and Taiwanese diplomats and officials

NO NEED TO APPEASE CHINA, SAYS POMPEO

The restrictions were introduced decades ago to appease the Chinese government, which lays claim to the island, the US state department said. "The US-Taiwan relationship need not, and should not, be shackled by self-imposed restrictions of our permanent bureaucracy," Pompeo said. China termed it an attempt to sabotage the next administration

2ND IMPEACHMENT MOVE TO START TODAY

The Democrats plan to introduce an article of impeachment against President Donald Trump on Monday, in a bid to stop him from running for president again in 2024
On Sunday, Pennsylvania's Pat Toomey became the second GOP senator to demand that Trump "resign and go away" | P11

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NUMBER OF DAYS LEFT FOR DONALD TRUMP TO REMAIN U.S. PRESIDENT

Cabinet expansion on Wednesday, says CM after Delhi visit

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru/New Delhi

THE much-awaited cabinet expansion will in all likelihood happen on Wednesday, Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa said after his arrival from New Delhi late on Sunday evening.

"I will induct seven ministers into the cabinet. Since January 14 is Sankranti festival, we will have the oath-taking ceremony on January 13 afternoon," the CM said. Sounding confident, he said the names cleared for induction will be approved, but added that there may be one or two changes. "Everything will be finalised tomorrow (Monday)," he said.

In a full cabinet of 34 ministers, Yediyurappa now has 27. Among those in the ministerial race are MLAs Umesh Katti, N Munirathna, M P Renukacharya, Aravind Limbavali, Basanagouda Patil Yatnal, and S R Vishwanath. Three MLAs — C P Yogeshwar, M T B Nagaraj and R Shankar — too are aspiring for ministerial berths. Another MLC, A H Vishwanath, too was in the race, but his hopes were dashed when the Karnataka High Court, on November 30, barred him from becoming a minister until at least May this year.

Earlier in the day, the CM,



Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa and Union Home Minister Amit Shah in New Delhi on Sunday | EXPRESS

who made a surprise visit to the national capital, met Union Home Minister Amit Shah and BJP national president JP Nadda and discussed state politics including cabinet expansion and finalisation of candidates for the upcoming bypolls for two assembly and one parliamentary seats.

Emerging from the meeting, the CM was optimistic about getting the final nod from the central leadership for the cabinet rejig in the state. "On the cabinet expansion, there was a detailed discussion. You will get good news soon," Yediyurappa told reporters in New Delhi. The CM stressed that this was the last meeting on the issue of cabinet expansion with the BJP top brass. "A 101 per cent, this is the last meeting. They are going to clear the names as soon as possible," he maintained. P4

Chhattisgarh first state to block Covaxin

State health minister says he is not confident of asking people to take the jab as it is yet to finish phase 3 trial

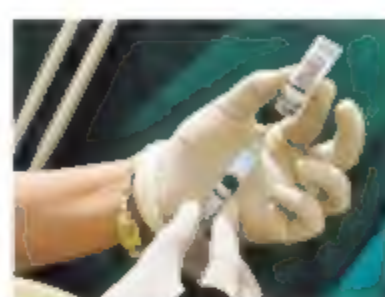
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CHHATTISGARH'S Congress government on Sunday said it was not inclined to use Bharat Biotech's Covaxin unless the vaccine successfully completes the recommended testing process, thus becoming the first state to indicate it may refuse the jab ahead of the national rollout of the vaccination programme on January 16. Whether or not other opposition states would adopt a similar approach was not

immediately known.

"The vaccine has been approved for emergency use (by the Drug Controller General of India). But its use should be avoided until its complete results are out," Chhattisgarh health minister T S Singh Deo said. "In my opinion, it should not be allowed in the state. As of now, I am not confident of asking people to accept this vaccine," he added.

"We mustn't rush headlong into starting its widespread use but wait for completion of phase 3 trials and its apprais-



Please ensure there are no proxies at all; the beneficiaries need to be uniquely and undeniably identified

Ram Sewak Sharma, head of tech and data management group on Covid-19

al. Else, it would set a precedent for other companies seeking copycat approvals before completing trials," Singh Deo said, adding there was no point in risking human lives.

India recently granted emergency use authorisation to two vaccines, Oxford-AstraZeneca's Covishield manufactured by Serum Institute in India and Covaxin. Both vaccines achieved parameters set for safety and immunogenicity, the regulator said. However, experts severely criticised the regulator for clearing Cov-

axin without seeing its phase 3 efficacy data.

In Delhi, the Union Health Ministry held a video conference with officials from states and Union Territories to get feedback on the Co-WIN software that was trialled during the dry runs. Ram Sewak Sharma, the chairman of Empowered Group on Technology and Data Management to combat Covid-19, asked the states to urge the beneficiaries to seed their current mobile number with Aadhaar for registration on Co-WIN.

88 vaccine storage facilities readied across state as V-day draws close

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

WITH the first tranche of Covid-19 vaccines expected in the state in a day or two and the vaccination drive scheduled to begin on January 16, Health Minister Dr K Sudhakar on Sunday reviewed the arrangements being made for safe supply and storage of vaccine vials at the old office of the Health and Family Welfare Department at Anand Rao Circle here.

In all, there are 88 vaccine stores in Karnataka's immunisation cold chain network, as per data quoted by the minister. The two largest state storage facilities are in Bengaluru and Belagavi, followed by five regional storage facilities in Chitradurga, Kalaburagi, Dakshina Kannada, Mysuru and Bagalkot, he said.

There are 30 district vaccine storage facilities, in addition to one corporation vaccine storage in Bruhat Bengaluru

Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) limits. Besides, there are 50 block vaccine stores and 2,767 cold chain points. At least 900 logistic vehicles have been kept ready to transport the vaccines to various locations.

The vaccines will first reach the two state storage facilities in Bengaluru and Belagavi. From there, they will be distributed to the five regional stores and onward to the 30 district vaccine storage facilities. CONTINUED ON: P3

1 MADE THE RIGHT CHOICE: P3



Health Minister Dr K Sudhakar reviews arrangements for the safe supply and storage of vaccine vials at the Health and Family Welfare Department's old office at Anand Rao Circle, in Bengaluru on Sunday | EXPRESS

Once the guidelines are released, I will be the first person in Karnataka to take the vaccine. Scientists have put in humongous efforts to develop a safe vaccine

Dr K Sudhakar, Health Minister

EXPRESS READ

Divers find parts of plane wreckage in sea

Jakarta: Authorities said they determined the location of the crash site of a Boeing 737-500 on Sunday, a day after it crashed into the Java Sea. "We received reports from the diver team that the visibility in the water is good and clear, allowing the discovery of some parts of the plane," military chief Hadi Tjahjanto said. P11

Apple, Amazon remove Parler from platforms

Washington: Apple and Amazon suspended microblogging portal Parler, where most supporters of Trump were shifting their base.

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CONMAN YUVARAJ DROPS BJP LEADER'S NAME, DUPES BUILDER

M G CHETAN @ Bengaluru

BIG ticket 'deals' and high-profile names is how notorious conman Yuvaraj alias Swamy seems to have snared his victims. After the case of a retired judge, who was duped of ₹8.8 crore, another cheating case against him has come to light with a builder approaching the police.

Yuvaraj had allegedly promised the builder the post of chairman of the Central Silk Board and duped him of ₹30 lakh after demanding ₹3 crore to make him a "youth icon" in Indian politics. The builder Enith Kumar MC, a 40-year-old-year resident of Girinagar, had met Yuvaraj through a friend at a star hotel in August last year. For good measure, Yuvaraj introduced himself as a nephew of BJP National General Secretary B L Santhosh and claimed that he had close links with politicians. He even showed Enith Kumar photographs of himself with top political leaders to win his trust.

CONTINUED ON: P5



Farmers ransack Khattar's meet venue

HARPREET BAJWA @ Chandigarh

HARYANA Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar was on Sunday forced to cancel a Kisan Mahapanchayat that aimed to drum up support for the three contentious Central agriculture laws, as protesting farmers ransacked the event venue at Kaimla village in Karnal district.

The administration had anticipated trouble as farmers belonging to the Bharatiya Kisan Union (Charuni) had on Wednesday last said they would not allow the event to take place.

Yet, the intensity of the protest as the farmers broke through two levels of barricades on the road leading to the village and kept moving

ahead despite the police firing tear gas shells and using water cannons, left the administration overwhelmed.

Upon reaching the venue, the farmers vandalised the stage and broke chairs, tables and flower pots, while the police looked on as mere spectators.

The protesters also took control of a makeshift helipad where Khattar's helicopter was to land. While most of them squatted on it, some others damaged the helipad, forcing Khattar to call off the trip.

The farmers held black flags and shouted slogans against the BJP-led government as they pushed towards the venue. Karnal's Superintendent of Police Ganga Ram Punia

20 booked for stoning

The police registered an attempt to murder case against 20 farmers who allegedly stoned the vehicle of Deputy Speaker Ranbir Singh Gangwa during his visit to a village in Hissar

Agitating farmers ransacking the venue of Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar's Kisan Mahapanchayat, at Kaimla village in Karnal district on Sunday | P11

'Nasty' Sydney at it again, six offenders evicted

SWAROOP SWAMINATHAN
@ Chennai

THE Sydney crowd, it seems, has always been hostile. Hurling abuses at players can reach a different level.

If Saturday was nasty with allegations of racist abuses against two India players, Sunday turned out to be extremely sour as Mohammad Siraj, who was allegedly racially abused on Saturday as well, had to face the brunt again. He and stand-in skipper Ajinkya Rahane approached the on-field umpires to complain about the behaviour of a section of the crowd at the Sydney Cricket Ground.

At least six people were evicted over allegations of racism that is threatening to overshadow the keenly-contested third Test between India and Australia. Just before the hosts declared at tea on the fourth day, Siraj was targeted by the crowd. The security officials, who had instructed the India team to bring such incidents to their

notice as and when it happens after Saturday, involved the stadium officials who interviewed the fans before ejecting the offenders. As per protocol, New South Wales police, as well as Cricket Australia opened an investigation into the matter.

After the day's play, India spinner R Ashwin said the team was happy with the action taken. However, he also revealed that the crowd in Sydney has always been

like this — hostile and nasty. "This has been a continuous thing at Sydney," he said. "I have experienced it as well. They do tend to get nasty. I don't know why and for what reason." Ashwin, who visited Australia on three previous tours, said, "If I take myself back to the first tour in 2011-12, I had no clue what racial abuse was or how you can be made to feel small in front of so many people."

In the end, Ashwin's words aptly sums it up: "disappointing is actually a very, very mild word, I must say." P13

SAVING WILDLIFE

Bandipur elephants, tigers stare at thirsty summer

K SHIVA KUMAR @ Mysuru

THE poor monsoon last year and the depletion of water levels in the Kabini and Nugu Reservoirs is a worry for all. But what has added to the worry of the forest personnel at the Bandipur National Park is how they will quench the thirst of 2,500 elephants, 173 tigers, over 300 leopards and other wildlife population.

The fast drying-up waterholes have made the government set up solar pumps at 45 of the 365 tanks across the reservoir that would cater to the needs of the animals. However,

the ground staff feel that more such solar pumps need to be installed to fill up the waterholes.

S R Natesh, Conservator of Forest, Bandipur Tiger Reserve, admitted that the fall in the water levels in both Kabini and Nugu compared to the previous year has been causing concern. He said that in 2019, the waterholes were brimming and had enough water both inside and outside the national park due to incessant rains.

But the scanty rainfall last year is making the wildlife stare at a thirsty future. He said that they have held a meeting with



village heads, youth clubs and others seeking their cooperation in conservation activities.

Efforts are on to bring in Corporate Social Responsibility funds to launch programmes in the villages falling in the fringe, he said. P5

With the mercury levels set to rise after Sankranti, the other worry is the spectre of forest fires which the Bandipur National Park witnessed in 2019. However, the forest department has geared up to prevent such fires. With more than 450 fire line staff and around 600 forest staff, the authorities have almost completed the fire line work around the park that will help in controlling any accidental fire in the reserve forest. The fire line work has been completed for more than 2,500 km at vulnerable points and in almost all the ranges falling in the reserve forest. P5

From boat to canoe, MP fisherman's daughter living her Olympic dream

ANURAG SINGH @ Bhopal

IT is another rags-to-riches tale. In 2016, she was ferrying boats to help her father and four elder sisters for fishing in the backwaters of Indira Sagar Dam on Narmada in Khandwa district of Madhya Pradesh. Her only motive was to repay her family's debt.

Five years down the line, the script has taken a dramatic turn. From boat to canoe, dam to the vast expanse of the Bhopal Lake, the journey has taken her to the India national camp that would select a team for Asian Olympic qualifier in



Kaveri Dhimar (centre)

Pattaya, Thailand (March 14-17). She is tipped to emerge as India's top woman canoeer and make her international canoeing debut two months later.

We are talking about Kaveri Dhimar, all of 17 years, who has already won 12 gold medals at national canoeing events.

"I'm fifth among the seven

sisters and two little brothers. We didn't have any land and being from the fishermen community, our parents only relied on fishing in rivers to run the family," Kaveri told TNIE.

Memories of helping her elder sisters fish in the backwaters of Indira Sagar Dam on river Narmada in 2016 to repay her father's loan of ₹40,000 are still fresh in her mind. "We finally succeeded," she said.

In the same year, the Khandwa district sports officer Joseph Baxla spotted Kaveri's talent in swimming and took her to the MP Water Sports Academy in Bhopal. P10